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**Summary:**

Looks like an easy equation: Some elements, including food and energy supply, result in well-being. So we just had to work technically on the elements, to get the necessary amount and right mix for being well? But the condition for this solution is taking well-being as fixed. Compared with different times and cultures we see that it's nothing less than that. Well-being is a feeling and as such it depends on expectations. The task is to lower our expectations and to aim for a new lifestyle which is not dependent on the things around us.

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The question, how to improve well-being facing a crisis in food and energy supply, looks like an easy equation. On the one side we have the state of well-being, which arises out of the components on the other side.

At the moment we are having problems with at least two of the elements, which seem so necessary to us. The lifestyle we chose, particularly in the developed countries, is built on fossil fuels. Now, after thousands of years and with more and more people to join this way of life, we realize, that our common energy base is limited. The sources of oil are getting dry and we only discuss the question, when the peak of oil production is reached. Are there five years left or thirty or is it already behind us? What can we do? We can develop new technologies, to drill in deeper beds or we can try to solve the problem of nuclear waste and pin our hopes on radioactive energy. Confronted with increasing pollution and climate change, the call for green energy is getting louder. Some say, the Sahara Desert would be enough to supply electricity for the whole planet. I don't know, if this is really true. But it seems clearly to me, that we should try: Every kilowatt hour produced without emission is a good kilowatt hour. Probably there will be a mix, to produce the amount of energy we need.

So we could technically fulfill the requirements of energy. And we could technically lower the need for energy, if we would put more efficiency in place. For instance by using economical cars, energy-saving lamps, lagged houses. We could generate the same effects with significant less energy.

The same problem exists in the area of food supply. And there is also a similar solution. There are roughly one billion people famishing on this planet. The excess of population and the climate change diminish the area of cultivable land. Again we look

in our manual and find some ways to increase the amount of food per hectare. We can protect the plants with herbicides and pesticides and we can change their genetic code to make them more fruitful. And we can be more efficient, for example substitute extensive cattle breeding by growing and eating more plants.

This is what we can do. Is this everything we can do? Or, asked in a different manner: Should we do this? Is the technical, the scientific way the right way to solve our problems? Isn't it the origin of the problems?

I think, the main problem of our equation for well-being lays not on the side of the components. It's not meant not to search for a substitution of fossil fuel by cleaner energy. And we should also try to feed all of the actual over six billion and soon about ten billion people by improving our agricultural methods. But we should not forget, that not only the elements in our equation result in well-being, but rather our wish for well-being defines the amount of the components we need. This wouldn't be a problem to think about if we took well-being as fixed. But in my mind, it's nothing less than this.

Why do we aim for well-being? For being well, I guess. And being well cannot be separated from feeling well, in fact the latter is the necessary condition of the former, if it's not the same. Ask the people of former times and you surely will find someone who was happy, who was glad, who was feeling well. And ask people from other countries and there you will find the same phenomenon. And they did not nor do not have the same range of food we have. And they did not nor do not need the same amount of energy we need. The elements of our equation are not fixed because well-being is not fixed. There is no law of happiness which calls for a static number of TV sets. There is no rule which tells us, that we have to drive a certain rate of kilometres to feel better. There is no natural relation between the winter season in middle europe and the appetite for strawberries from spain or countries even farther.

Well-being does not come to us from outer side. It is a feeling and like every feeling it depends on experience and expectations. Our expectations of getting more for everybody all the time seems in some way maniac. This ambition never comes to an end. Where is the point to stop? The earth is finite, our wishes are not. This contradiction led to the problems we are facing now. We see a growing discrepancy between our expectations and our experiences. Of course we can try to work harder on the physical parts of the problem and there is no doubt that we have to do so if we want to feed our starving planet-mates. But in general I believe we should backpedal now and stop wringing out the sponge called earth.

That's why we should turn our attention to the side of expectations, i. e. to our idea of well-being. So we have to ask ourselves: How do we want to live, taking into account the people living around us and the people following us. When we fulfill the condition of providing everybody with the food and energy he or she needs to survive, then we can look for further possibilities which must not injure the right to live for everybody with and after us. This could be a hard change especially for people in developed countries, but already our children will get used to a life with less journeys by airplanes and smaller supermarkets. Our task is to reach satisfaction with the less. But taking in mind that we are not alone and that happiness does not lie in things around us, it should work out. Nosce te ipsum!